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SUBJECT Railroad Development: Komárom Railroad Bridge/Budapest-Miskolc Line/Sztalinvaros-Retszilas Line

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Komárom Railroad Bridge

2. "The reconstruction of the railroad bridge across the Danube River at Komárom is scheduled for completion 1 November 53. This bridge, which links the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian parts of the town, was destroyed during World War II.
3. "The bridge is constructed on two pillars. The main 'arcade' of the bridge was completed 20 June 53. The links between the main body of the bridge and the shore approaches are not finished. The bridge uses elevators manufactured by the Jozsef Attila and Georgiu Dej factories in Budapest.
4. "The work is being done by Hungarian and Czech labor brigades. They are engaged in shock-working competition under the direction of Communist bosses.
 - (a) The construction on the Hungarian side is being done by the 7 honvéd munkaszolgálatos ezred -- the 7th Working Battalion -- of the Hungarian Army, under the command of 1st Lt István Boni. This is a punitive unit to which soldiers have been sentenced for 'political unreliability', 'bourgeois class origin' or 'anti-Communist conduct'. The battalion is billeted in the casemates of the fortress of Monostor. The fortress is built on a site that is open to Danube floods. It is terribly damp, and the battalion-members are always getting sick. Yet Lt. Boni has forbidden them to report sick and get off from work. He has also cancelled daily sickness-report medical visits; these must be limited to every three days. The local doctor, who is in charge of the medical care of the battalion, must observe this order.
 - (b) The construction on the Czechoslovakian side is being done by internees from the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia. They have been told that if the bridge project is finished 1 November 53 as scheduled, they will be released and allowed to settle wherever they want in Czechoslovakia, except the Sudetenland.

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- 2 -

50X1-HUM

5. "No safety measures have been taken to protect the workers. In one accident nine Czechs and three Hungarians fell into the Danube and were drowned in the whirlpools (wirbeln). Boats now patrol the bridge area ready to pick up any workers who fall into the water.

Budapest - Miskolc Railroad Line

6. "The electrification of the Budapest - Miskolc railroad line is scheduled for completion at the end of 1954. Most of the wires (oberleitung) and transformer stations were finished in 1952. The Hatvan - Fuzessabony sector of the line could, however, only be supplied with the concrete towers for the wire system because the Kiskunfélegyháza Konnyu Vaszerkezetek Gyara (factory for light iron work) proved unable to furnish the iron traverses as scheduled until 1 May 53. Foundation work on the transformer stations for the Fuzessabony - Nyekladhaza sector is in full swing. The transformer stations of the Hatvan - Fuzessabony sector are ready but have not yet been equipped with transformers; the Ganz factory delayed shipment of the transformers that were on order because it was suddenly ordered to build at shock-work tempo a generator system for Rumania.
7. "All the work on this railroad electrification project is being done by skilled experts. They are billeted in railroad cars which are stationed on sidings of the larger stations of the line. They complain that the cars are full of bugs and fleas left by Soviet troops who had previously been billeted in the same cars and had left without disinfecting them. (These Soviet troops allegedly have or are constructing v-rocket launching installations at the Hajmáskér shooting range. This range existed prior to 1945.)
8. "The electrification workers also complain, that, despite their contract, they are not allowed to visit their families in Budapest on weekends. They must often work Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Some report that their families have been evicted from their Budapest apartments, and even deported from the city, on the ground that 'the head of the household is permanently absent from Budapest'. The families affected are almost exclusively those of workers who had belonged to the bourgeois class. When the workers whose families have been deported finish their jobs, the Munkaero Gazdalkodási Hivatal (Manpower Administration) forbids them to join their families. They must live in Budapest in barracks for 'unmarried workers'. In this way 'non-proletarian workers' are brought under complete State control and separated from their families.

Sztalinváros - Rétaszilas Railroad Line

9. "The railroad line between Sztalinváros and Rétaszilas is finished, but it is not open to traffic because two viaducts remain to be built. These viaducts are of concrete construction, 120 meters long. They have two arches (bogen). One is 30 meters high. The other is 46 meters high. The main purpose of this line is to provide a direct line between the coal mining center of Pécs and the huge industrial center of Sztalinváros.
10. "Special switch houses (wechsel-zentralen) have been built. One is in the station of Barcs-Ménaszajor. The switch mechanisms in these houses were built by Obudai Mérőműszer Gyara (the Obuda Factory for Precision Instruments). They proved defective at the Barcs-Ménaszajor station. On 30 April 53 a workers' train entering the station crashed into a halted (stehend) train that was being used for earth-moving works. Many casualties occurred; the death toll was seven. The news of the accident was kept secret. Even the Hungarian State Railway (MAV) employees who knew about it preferred to shut up for security reasons. Laszlo Idranyi, the chief engineer who designed the switch house, was sentenced to death by an emergency court. Actually he was innocent because the plans for which he was responsible were impeccable. The construction work, for which he was not responsible, must have been faulty. It is rumored that Idranyi's sentence has been converted to life imprisonment."

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